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# ADDRESS

OF

HIS EXCELLENCE,

JOS. A. ✓ WRIGHT,

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF INDIANA,

PRONOUNCED AT THE

NEW YORK AGRICULTURAL STATE FAIR,

AT

ELMIRA, OCTOBER 5, 1855.

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MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE  
NEW YORK AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY:—

“All flesh is grass,” is a declaration of an inspired writer; the demonstration of which truth lies amid the plainest facts of Nature. As the law of the grass is, that it “withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth,” so, under the same law, exists everything which the grass produceth.

Of the soul of man—in the superiority and immortality of which we all believe—it is not my province, nor is this an occasion, to discourse. Considered simply in his material nature—produced, nourished, and re-produced, as that nature is, from the earth and its fruits—man is not a wanderer, who, after “prospecting” through the universe, has selected this beautiful farm of the Earth for his residence and heritage. He is a part of it. In common with its other productions, vegetable and animal, he has risen from, and lives upon, its bosom. He is the last born—the perfection of its fruits.

In common with the grasses, grains, and fruits, upon which he subsists, he is subject to the law of dissolution and decay. “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” is the law of the material man, as surely as it is the law of the soul that it shall return unto God who gave it:

“Each speed them to their source,”

returning to their respective treasures the life and wealth which was loaned them.

Such, then, being the nature of our alliance with the Earth, its cultivation becomes our first duty and necessity. It is the normal employment of man; and none other is so natural and honorable. The sweet instinct and the gentle purity, of the suckling nestling in the bosom of its mother, are but counterparts of the purity and dignity of the true and diligent cultivator of the Earth.

In the prosecution of this work, we must understand, and act in conformity with, the laws of nature. Science, in investigating and expounding these laws, appears nowhere more useful and graceful than as the hand-maid of the farmer. Concerning these laws, we can gather information from the history of the creation, in the first chapter of Genesis—a history as remarkable for its science as for its simplicity.

At first, “the Earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The elements of the earth were all there, rude and unshapen, upon the face of whose morasses and depths ‘darkness’ rested. There was no land—no water—no clouds, or fertilizing showers—no light—no firmament.

Now, how was order brought out of this chaos? And what was the first great agricultural result? The first command was, “Let there be light; and there was light.” Thus, in order of creation, was established that law which has ever since prevailed, making light a first and indispensable element in the productions of the earth.

In connection with this was established the law under which we find repose a necessary alternation to stimulus. The light nourishes and stimulates; darkness, therefore, precedes it, as a period of rest. “And God called the light *day*; and the darkness he called *night*; and the evening and the morning were the first day.”

The next step in the process, was that which assigned to the heavens and the earth their separate powers of fertility. Light, evaporating the waters, held a portion in suspense, to descend, in due time, in fertilizing rains and showers. “And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters.” Then followed the separation of the land from the water; and “God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas.”

Now all was in preparation for production and fertility; and, before the creation of man, or animated nature, “God said, *let the earth bring forth grass*.” Thus, the pioneer settler, who now penetrates the vast forests which cover with “darkness” the soil he purposes to subdue, first, in conformity with the order of creation, says, “Let there be light;” and the sturdy stroke of the woodman repeats the command till the trees lie low, and the “light” greets the soil. The waters are exhaled by its kisses, and ascend above the firmament; the ditches are dug; and every throw of the busy spade says, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear,” in order that the earth may bring forth grass.

*Grass—grass*—the great material which supports all flesh, and forms the material nature of man himself! Grass—the cultivation and perfection of which it becomes one of the first duties of the husbandman to promote!

Though this is the oldest command, and lies at the foundation

of all agricultural wealth, yet, the subject to which it has relation receives from agriculturists less thought, less attention, less investigation, than is given by them to any other subject of rural interest.

Our zeal, industry, and wealth have been freely expended in the practical illustration of improved methods of cultivating grains, fruits and vegetables, and in the improvements of our stock, farming implements, and machinery. We have imported, at great expense, all kinds of domestic animals; our State fairs and our county fairs annually furnish reports, essays, and addresses, on every branch of agricultural industry; we have books and learned treatises on horses, cattle, sheep, swine, and even poultry; and many volumes of useful essays on cotton, wheat, corn, potatoes, fruits, rice, flax, hemp, and tobacco. All well enough; yet, at this day, we have not a book, report, or pamphlet, that furnishes the American farmer with even the *names* of the grasses of his country, to say nothing of that essential information which, by the tests of science, fixes the value of each kind, and determines the question of its adaptation to different soils, and to different sections of the United States.

The American farmer cultivates, or, to speak more correctly, he bestows some attention on the cultivation of ten or a dozen kinds of grass, while the teeming earth, without tillage, furnishes innumerable varieties of this staff of animal life, in all latitudes and longitudes throughout our wide-spread country. No crop approaches so near a spontaneous, uncultivated yield, as the grass, and none pays so large a profit. While it is impossible for me to state, with precision, the annual value of this crop, I do not hesitate to express the opinion that, in this country, *the hay crop* alone, imperfect as it is, and receiving so little attention, is greater in value, at this day, than the combined crops of cotton, rice, and tobacco.

According to the census of 1840, the mere *hay crop* of the U. S. was 10,248,108 tons; in 1850, it was 13,838,642 tons. I estimate the hay crop of 1855, at 15,000,000 tons, which, at ten dollars per ton, would amount to 150,000,000 dollars. The cotton crop of 1853, is valued at 128,000,000 dollars. Of the hay crop, more than one-half is produced by four States, to-wit:—New York, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois—your own State producing more than one-fourth of the whole; and yet no State has made this article a primary object of cultivation.

We treat the *hay crop* as one of minor importance. But little attention is paid to it:—the meadow must wait till the other crops are disposed of; then the grass is cut, too often without any reference to its condition, or any well prepared place for its reception.

The value of the *hay crop* of this country, however, is not equal to the value of the grass crop appropriated to pasturage, even in the present unimproved condition of the latter crop. But if we make the values only equal, then the total value of the annual grass crop—*hay and pasturage*—of the United States, may be estimated at

\$300,000,000, or an amount equal to the aggregate value of all other agricultural products of our country, excepting wheat and corn.

I use the word "grass," not in its strict botanical signification; but, according to common usage, to designate the herbage or plants which constitute the food of cattle and other beasts.

Begining with the few facts which are known in relation to the number and qualities of the grasses of this country, we should by means of scientific investigation and judicious experiments, endeavor to increase our knowledge, with respect to this great branch of agricultural interest. We find one kind of grass in this latitude, which, it is said, is well adapted for making a sure crop of hay, and good pasture. It stands the drought well; is not much injured by rain in harvesting; forms a feeble sod; and is easily subdued when the meadow is to be transformed into a grain field. Another, elsewhere, that is suitable to wet prairies; less exhausting to the soil than the first; and is especially recommended for cultivation in the early settlement of a country, before a system of drainage can be effected. Another, said to be very productive, and exceedingly nutritious; and, when once well set, it forms a permanent sod; but it is slow in taking root, and will not stand our summer heat. Another which grows in tufts, and, in autumn, its leaves spread out most vigorously, for fall pasturage. Another, from its aromatic and astringent qualities is rendered agreeable to the palate of stock; it retains its verdure in the depth of winter, and, in the beginning of spring, it shoots forth with vigor. Another, with its rich long slender leaves, two feet in height, is seen in the fine uplands of the limestone region; in autumn it falls over, in thick windrows, matting the whole surface together, and retaining its freshness and nutritious qualities amid the frosts and snows of winter. Another, such as the grass which forms the celebrated pastures of the Swiss Alps, and those of the Tyrol, is peculiarly distinguished for possessing qualities favorable to the secretion of milk, and is, therefore, preferred for milch cows. Another, it is said, will endure cold and shade, without suffering injury; another is only suitable for the light and heat of summer; another, rich and nutritious, comes up after the crops are laid by, and affords fine crops of hay; another, adapted to warm, moist river bottoms, and, in some sections of our country, yielding five tons of hay per acre, is highly valued by some graziers; another is found growing on dry, gravelly soils, and hill sides; and part of its value consists in the numerous seeds which are retained in the pod, long after they ripen—serving as food for beast and fowl.

"Grasses," said a distinguished philosopher, "are Nature's first care." They are the most general, extensive, and hardy, of the earth's productions. They are nearly of endless variety, and adapted to almost every climate. They endure the trampling of men and beasts, the browsing of cattle, the parching droughts of Summer, and the snows and ice of Winter; and spring into new and

often more vigorous life, under influences which to other plants would prove destructive.

On mountain tops, where the warmth of the summer's sun is not sufficient to ripen their seeds, they live by their roots, and with thick clustering leaves protect these roots, producing thereby the densest and most beautiful verdure. And it is reported by one writer, that, for the preservation of the grasses in those localities where the ripening of their seeds is important, the wild beasts, guided by a remarkable instinct, leave untouched the stems that support the flowers. Do not the profusion of grasses with which the earth is clad, and the laws which so remarkably preserve them, indicate that they are worthy of the special attention and culture of those for whom the earth is ordered and established in fertility and beauty?

The farmer who understands the importance of bestowing careful attention upon his stock, diligently husbands the grasses and grains which furnish them with food and clothe them with flesh. But how little does he think of the fact that these very grasses should receive attention like that which he bestows on his cattle. Plants cannot live without food, more easily than the ox and sheep; and hence, there is a great sphere for study and care as to the kind of food which is adapted to the most perfect production of grasses; and there is a loud demand to protect them against injuries and depredations; but many a farmer will spend money and labor, in rendering his flocks secure from wild animals, and in protecting his granaries from the pilferings of vermin, and yet think little of the noxious influences and weeds that are steadily stealing from his grasses the food which nature has provided for them.

All plants receive more or less of their nutriment from the atmosphere; and for that purpose, are furnished with organs adapted to absorb aliment from light and moisture. These organs are found in their leaves, while the root is the portion that draws sustenance from the earth. The larger the leaves, the greater is the proportion of nutriment received from the atmosphere. Hence, grasses with *small leaves* exhaust the soil rapidly; whereas, the larger leaved varieties, like clover, drawing less from the soil and more from the atmosphere, are the best fertilizers—returning to the earth, when turned under, a larger percentage of fertilizing elements; and such grasses can, therefore, be successfully adapted to the culture of light lands which would entirely refuse to support other varieties.

I regard it as a well settled principle, that there are, in every country, indigenous plants which, when their qualities are fully understood, are precisely those which are designed by a beneficent Providence, to furnish the proper elements for the support of animal life. The same principle prevails in relation to soils, and their capacities to support vegetable life. Clay, sand, marl, and shell, lying in close proximity to each other, afford to the intelligent farm-

er or planter, the means of increasing and preserving the fertility of the land.

Although neither the number nor the names of our indigenous grasses have been ascertained, we cannot be ignorant of their great variety, richness and durability, when we look over our country, from the 49th degree of north latitude to the extreme south, and see the health, thrift, and superiority of our domestic stock, and the number and condition of the wild animals of our forests and prairies.

On the spurs and slopes of the Rocky Mountains, and on the head waters of the Red river of the north, immense herds of buffalos subsist on a kind of grass which retains its freshness throughout the winter, and which remains green and nutritious while other grasses of the plains and valleys are dried up by the heat and drought of summer.

It appears, from the statements of botanists, that two hundred and fifteen varieties of herbaceous plants, commonly called grasses, are cultivated in Great Britain. Perhaps, in our own country, the student of Nature might find more than one-half of this number, growing spontaneously in the wild prairies which cover millions of acres. You may make your track through these immense plains, and by the side of your path, each year, there will spring up new varieties of plants and grasses. Where this wild grass is cut, or pastured, it brings forth, annually, finer, better, and different varieties, which are eagerly sought for, by the stock, while the other and wilder varieties are shunned. Who shall estimate the number of our grasses? Who shall classify them? And—what is a far more important question—who shall test them in the crucible of science, and determine their respective values, so that the practical farmer may, with certainty, avail himself of the advantages which will result from the cultivation of the best varieties?

Nature seems to indicate the propriety of sowing more than one kind of seed for meadows and pastures; as, in the natural herbage, we rarely find the whole surface of the soil occupied by one kind of plants. The earth produces almost an infinite variety of grasses, adapted to every conceivable kind of soil and location. The cold and bleak mountain sides, the arid sand plains, the alluvial bottom lands, the marshes and the bogs, are covered with various kinds of vegetation, each kind differing from others in its organic structure and qualities, and each requiring certain appropriate and peculiar elements for its support. The agriculturist who avails himself of his knowledge of these facts, may greatly increase the value of his meadows and pastures. Where as many stalks of one kind is produced as the soil is capable of supporting, another variety, that will take from the soil different elements, may grow between the first kind without interfering materially with it; as it is not a competitor for the same nutritious particles in the soil.

It is difficult to determine, with respect to any country, the proportion of meadow and pasture lands, as compared to the total quantity of land under cultivation. It is said that, in France, the meadows and pastures constitute about one-seventh of the cultivated lands: in England, about three-fourths. In the United States, the amount does not, probably, exceed one-third, even in the best grazing and hay-growing States; and, in many of the States, the number of acres used for meadows and pastures, does not amount to one-eighth of the total quantity of land under cultivation.

A general agricultural error is a national error—for the correction of which we must look to the agriculturists themselves. Some of this class of errors are especially worthy the consideration of some of the people of the United States. For instance, possessing, in favorable climates, a rich territory, ninety-five times as large as England, more than seventeen times as large as France, and more than twelve times as large as Germany, the people of the United States, overlooking and neglecting their own vast resources, import, annually, millions of dollars' worth of an article, which, for its production, depends almost wholly upon grass.

The holding of land without improving it, is a public injury. In many portions of the country, immense tracts of land having been purchased at government prices for purposes of speculation, are owned and held by individuals who never intended to plant a tree, or turn a furrow on the soil. Such lands remain unimproved, checking the progress of improvements around them, and retarding the settlement and cultivation of many of the most fertile districts in the western and the south-western States.

In every part of our country, we have complaints in relation to the spontaneous growth of certain weeds and shrubs, which, if not eradicated, will invariably *injure*, and ultimately *take* the meadows and pastures. In certain districts where cattle, horses, mules, sheep, and other stock run and feed, it is known that there is a gradual increase of destructive weeds of various classes, depending upon the kind of stock pastured, and the character of the grass. What a field is here for experiment, investigation, and useful discovery!

Wherever there is found a large supply of lime in the soil, and a clay subsoil, grass will grow luxuriantly, and form a durable sod that will stand long-continued drought and excessively hot summers. The silurian hills on the borders of the western waters, and the mountain limestone regions are well adapted to the cultivation of grasses. But in these portions of our country, we will find it difficult to compete successfully with the sandstone and drift formations in the cultivation of wheat, and other cereal grains. We cannot raise fifty bushels of wheat to the acre in the limestone region. Each portion of our country, however, has its own peculiar undeveloped elements of wealth; and the countless and increasing facilities which our oceans, lakes, rivers, canals, and railroads, afford for an interchange of our various staple productions, should induce the farmers and planters of the several States in the Union to study carefully the nature and qualities of the soil which they respectively cultivate. Those districts in which the cultivation and improvement of our indigenous grasses shall receive proper attention, may become the wealthiest portions of the republic.

We shall always find superior stock in those districts where the cultivation of grasses receives attention. Many demonstrations of this fact may be seen in our own country, as well as in Europe. Notwithstanding the large population of Great Britain, (who are mainly dependent on her commerce and manufactures,) she could not sustain herself, if she were compelled to import hay for her dairies and meat markets. There was a time in her history when she was dependent upon her mountains, and her neighbors, for her butter and meats. But, with her cultivation of grasses, her population has increased; and her stock, of every kind, has attained a degree of excellence which supports a demand for it in the markets of all countries.

In Holland, where the business of rearing cattle constitutes one of the principal sources of wealth, and where the price of landed property is high, a large portion of the surface of the country is devoted to pasture and the cultivation of grasses. It is said, that the cultivation of a *single kind of grass*, in Jamaica, has increased, beyond computation, the value of the trade and commerce of that island.

Blue grass has done for Kentucky, what turnips have done for Flanders, and por-

tions of England and Scotland—not only arrested the old process, which wore out the land, but restored the soil, and brought large profits to graziers.

Along the banks of the Merrimack, grass that, fifty years ago, was considered as a great evil, has, within the last twenty years, been regarded as equal, if not superior, to any other variety for hay. Similar favorable changes have been made in the South, and in every portion of the country, where the attention of agriculturists has been directed to the subject.

A planter of Alabama, in a recent communication to the United States Patent Office, says: "Our native, or spontaneous grasses, with proper care and attention, would prove an invaluable treasure. The experiments of Major Seymour Powell fully demonstrate the correctness of this impression, and prove most conclusively that the crop of crab-grass grown on a prairie field after the corn is laid by, if well saved, would be worth more than the corn. To test the matter, he measured several acres. Off the first acre he gathered thirty bushels of corn, which at the market price, 75 cents, brought \$22.50. Off the same acre, he saved 2,675 pounds of nice hay, worth from \$1 to \$1.25 per cwt.—say \$26.75. The second acre yielded 3,780 pounds hay, worth \$37.80, and corn worth \$28.40."

According to the statements of a distinguished florist and botanist, Mr. Prince, of Flushing, L. I., there are, in California, hundreds of species of trees, shrubs, herbaceous and bulbous flowering plants, indigenous to that region, which are totally distinct from those found in other parts of the globe; many of them being "entirely new to the botanic world." Mr. Prince says, "In bulbous flowers, this country [California] is particularly rich, and many of them are of great beauty and interest, and particularly striking. The balsamic character of very many of the *herbaceous plants* forms a peculiar feature in that class."

Some friends of agriculture are making efforts to improve our grasses, by the introduction of foreign varieties. Many of the English grasses are hardy and very nutritious. They might not endure our climate. But, on the other hand, it is possible that a change of climate would result in an improvement of the good qualities of a good grass.

It will, however, be time enough to make experiments upon foreign grasses, when we shall have learned something more of our own. Within the boundaries of our vast national domain, in various latitudes, climates, soils, and situations, we have, I doubt not, more different kinds of grass than are found in any other portion of the globe; and yet the number which we cultivate does not exceed twenty.

We should learn to appreciate the beauty, improve the growth, and increase the value of the indigenous trees, plants, and grasses of the United States. Leaving out of view the error of useless pecuniary expenditure, and regarding the subject as merely one of taste, I am inclined to believe that we have injured the appearance of many a large mansion, and marred the picturesque beauty of many an humble *home*, in attempting, by the importation of shrubs and grasses, to imitate the landscape gardening and the rural scenery of other countries. The native garniture of our own forests, fields, meadows and pastures, when modified and improved by our own hands, directed by a cultivated taste, will be sufficient to enrich, adorn and beautify our land.

These remarks are made, not with the conviction that I am offering any new facts for the consideration of good farmers—but with the hope of inciting the agriculturists of the country to look, with special interest, into the subject of our native grasses.—This subject has not received, nor does it now receive, that degree of public attention which it deserves.

We sow two or three kinds of grass seeds. Nature gives us numerous varieties of those which arrive at perfection, in different latitudes of our country, during each successive month, from Spring to Autumn:—yet, we are ignorant of the qualities of the grasses which grow spontaneously in our common pastures; and we know but little of the weeds which injure and destroy them.

Some time ago, in the course of a scientific examination, twenty-two species of grass were found on a single square foot of a rich ancient pasture in England. Recently in a western State, by means of the enterprise and industry of one lady, specimens of seventy-five kinds of grass were found, and presented as a *bouquet*, at an annual State Fair.

The worst of all depredations are those which ignorant and reckless men commit

on their mother earth—the source and support of organic life—when they destroy or impair the fertility of the land, either by their ignorance, or by their neglect of the means by which it may be improved and preserved. It is our duty to leave the earth in a condition as good, at least, as it was when we found it.

In many parts of our country the people seem to believe that the earth is possessed of a constitution so strong, so stout, and so healthy, that no extreme of bad usage can affect it injuriously; but Time, the great instructor, is demonstrating our folly, and warning us to change our modes of farming. While the husbandman carries forward his works of agricultural improvement, he must not forget the injunction, "Let the earth bring forth grass." If, disregarding this mandate, he shall continue to neglect the investigation and cultivation of grasses, the annual depreciation of his crops of corn, and other grains, will, ultimately, qualify him to appreciate fully the force of the Belgian maxim, "*No grass, no stock:—no stock, no manure:—no manure, no crops.*"

In no one thing does the ignorance of the laws of nature, so common among farmers, manifest itself so plainly as in the panic that spreads like an epidemic over the whole country, when the crops are threatened with any of the thousand casualties, incident, not to agricultural pursuits only, but to every other human avocation. The merchant and the banker see a financial crisis approaching, and, understanding the laws of commerce and trade, deliberately prepare to meet what they cannot avert, without the murmuring and croaking that fills all the land when the crops are in danger. This disposition to complain about failures in the crops, not only betrays ignorance, but it exhibits an almost impious want of confidence in the wisdom and beneficence of that over-ruling Power that "shapes all our ends, rough-hew them as we will."

We may justly complain of the oppressions of human governments, of the wrongs and outrages of society, of "man's inhumanity to man;" we may murmur over hard times, and financial embarrassments, but we should look upon the thousand ills that, in threatening aspect, stand around all the productions of the soil, as so many friendly rebukes from a kind Providence, reminding us of our ignorance of the natural laws on which these things depend.

In the severe drought of last fall, that blighted the hopes of the husbandman throughout the greater part of the north-western States, when the croaking of ruined crops had attained its highest point, a close observer could not fail to see, here and there, a field green and luxuriant in the midst of surrounding desolation. If you stopped to inquire into the cause, and asked for an explanation, you would learn that no special showers had visited those favored fields, but that they had been subsoiled, or deeply plowed, well stirred and kept in a condition to absorb all the moisture afloat in the atmosphere, which compensated for the showers that came not.—Instead, then, of repining, we should profit by the lesson, and *go and do likewise.*

On the first and second days of June last, portions of Indiana were visited by severe and destructive frosts; a few days afterwards the farmers might be seen in anxious groups, with long faces, exhibiting specimens of their ruined crops, with all the evidences of despair over the gloomy future. But, on visiting the fields, you would find that the injury to the wheat was confined to that which was in bloom; the Mediterranean and early Alabama varieties, many fields of which were then in full flower, were injured, while the great body of the crop, consisting of other and late varieties, wholly escaped, and we had more than an average crop, after all the panic.—From this, let us learn the lesson, that early wheat is in danger of frost, even on the 40th degree of latitude.

In low moist grounds, the corn fields suffered severely, while the corn in more elevated and better drained land was uninjured. The undrained ground was cooled down, by evaporation, even to the freezing point, while the absorbed rays of yesterday's sun kept the drier soil at a temperature above injury. *Drain, drain, drain,* was the voice of this friendly admonition from Providence, and we should receive all such admonitions with thanksgiving, instead of croaking.

The mandate that requires man to "eat bread in the sweat of his brow," contemplates the subjecting of men to a schooling, a discipline, that shall qualify them to contend successfully against the great and numerous difficulties which arise in their paths through life. It is not the lot of the tiller of the soil, to struggle against ordi-

nary foes. He finds giants by the wayside of life. He must contend with the elements of earth and air. Snows, storms, frosts, hail, and even rains, dews, and the blessed sunshine, are his enemies while he remains in ignorance of their influences. He who wages a warfare with the elements of earth and the air, in order to compel them to deliver up to him their rich treasures, will without doubt or question, suffer a defeat disastrous in proportion to his ignorance of the laws by which his adversaries are governed. But the farmer who understands these laws, will be able under the favor of heaven, not only to bring forth treasure from the earth, annually, but to explain the means by which he accomplishes his great work.

He studies the nature, condition, and quality of his lands; and his fields are *improved*, not *exhausted*, by cultivation. His knowledge, experience and judgment, enable him to adapt the crop so the soil, or to prepare the soil for the crop. He reasons, he reads, he reflects, he makes experiments, and he discovers new methods of overcoming old obstacles.

In this great work, we want, for leaders, men whose examples and precepts will excite the enthusiasm, and win the confidence of their fellow-laborers in the field of agriculture. In every farming district, throughout the vast extent of our fertile domain, *we want more men* qualified by their knowledge, their experience, their skill, and their enterprise, to instruct and encourage their fellow-men, in the task of "subduing the land." When we shall have the whole body of our practical farmers engaged, not merely physically, but mentally, in illustrating the power, beneficence, and dignity of the science of agriculture, the "*wilderness and the solitary places shall be glad for them* ; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

According to the census of 1850, one-eighth of our entire population live in cities whose population is over ten thousand; and at least one-fifth of the whole population are residing in towns, villages, and cities. Taking into view the extent of our territory, the sparseness of our population to the square mile, the cheapness and fertility of our lands, and the facilities for exchanging all commodities, and productions of skill and industry, I do not believe that the history of the world shows an instance in which the people of a civilized nation exhibited such a preference for city and village life.

When our population shall become two hundred millions, one-half of the people will be crowded in cities, towns, and villages—unless the popular sentiment of the nation, after overcoming the general aversion to manual labor, and subduing the hot thirst for professional and mercantile pursuits, shall awaken in the American mind a strong love for rural life. The present condition of our country, is well described by the poet:—

"Trade yields the sword; and Agriculture leaves  
Her half-turned furrows; other harvests fire  
An avarice of renown."

The object of these associations, in our townships, counties, and States, is not solely to enable the farmer to improve his stock, and increase his products. This end is highly important, and very desirable; but it is not one which should absorb all others. Man has a moral nature, of vastly greater value than his material and physical one. The increase of material wealth and prosperity, without a proportional increase of morals and intelligence, is not merely of doubtful advantage—it may justly be regarded as a *curse* rather than a blessing.

It is wisely ordered, therefore, that in order to attain to the greatest degree of material prosperity, learning and science must be united with muscular labor and material economy. The man whose life is devoted to the sciences, though understanding, by the analysis of the laboratory, the economy of plants, soils, and animal life, may prove a very poor practical farmer—while the farmer who despises "*book-learning*," will fall far behind his wiser neighbor, who seeks to blend with practical skill the discoveries and suggestions of the man of science.

It is on occasions, and at places, like the present, that hints and suggestions should be freely given and received, which may lead to the most successful blending of speculative discoveries with practical knowledge. One great object of these assemblages, should, therefore, be to diffuse general intelligence and scientific truths among agricultural communities; thereby aiding, not only in the increase of their material thrift, but in the development of the mighty resources of the earth.

Another class of subjects should not be overlooked. I allude to the connection between enlightened agriculture and the development of the social and moral nature of Man: the connection between agriculture and independence—between agriculture and the sacredness of the domestic relations and endearments—between agriculture and the recognition of that Providence upon whose care the farmer, more than any other man, should, from the nature of his pursuits, rely.

The tendency of agricultural pursuits is to give distinctness and strength to *home* associations and influences. The greater communities are made up of the smaller; and as a community increases in magnitude, it decreases in its local power and influences. At the base of all lies the divinely appointed institution of the *Family*, where the greatest power is concentrated in the hands of the father—who is the Patriarch, Legislator, Judge, and Executive of his household estate. Living on his own domain, with his woodlands, pastures, meadows, hills, and streams about him, he is supreme, with only those few and necessary limitations which the larger community throws around him. It is here that the influence of woman—man's first, last, best comforter on earth—is felt and recognized. It is here that “she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness.” It is here that “she looketh well to her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.” It was at *home*, that King Lemuel learned the good and wise “words that his mother taught him.” Mother! The sweetest word in all the babbling languages of men! It is the mission of woman—it is the holy mission of the mother—to impress upon the young mind, the first lessons of truth, virtue, wisdom, and courage. Her empire is in the affections of her husband and children, who “arise up and call her blessed.”

On the right regulation of these independent *households*, depends the welfare of the larger communities which, with powers more limited, are composed of these smaller ones. And, so far as the influences of these Associations and Fairs are calculated to ennoble, dignify, and enrich the occupation of the farmer, just so far will they tend to increase the attractiveness, and the wholesome influences of his home—making him and the members of his household, better citizens of the larger communities.

The *family* being a divine institution, the sentiment and the affection upon which it is based are innate in man. Hence its universality. No merely human institution, however perfect, can ever take its place. Directly or indirectly, almost all great and good men have been indebted, for their beneficent power and influence, to the early teachings of parents, and the genial nurture of *home*. Above all nations, we should cherish the family relation. The influence of *home*, was the inspiration that swelled the great hearts of our fathers for the struggle which has given freedom to their sons; and we will fail to transmit the boon to our descendants, if we enlist not for its preservation the helps by which it was originally won. If all homes could be made pleasant, and all family relations fraternal, kind, and pure, society would lose its hypocrisy and guile; and mankind, actuated by true Christian charity, would move steadily on, from triumph to triumph, towards the perfection of the intellectual and moral nature of man.

That spirit of inquiry, investigation, and enterprise, that has been awakened, at your township, county, and State fairs, by competition for premiums on household fabrics, and on products of the dairy, the farm, and the shop, may justly be regarded as a link in the chain of *home education*; and this is a very proper direction for things to take at this period in our history.

At the base of the prosperity of any people lies this great principle—*Make labor fashionable at home*. Educate, instruct, encourage; and offer all the incentives you can offer, to give interest and dignity to labor at *home*. Enlist the heart and the intellect of the *family* in the support of a domestic system that will make labor attractive at the homestead. By means of the powerful influences of early *home education*, endeavor to invest practical labor with an interest that will cheer the heart of each member of the family; and thereby you will give to your household the grace, peace, refinement, and attraction which God designed a *home* should possess.

The truth is, we must *talk* more, *think* more, *work* more, and *act* more, in reference to questions relating to *home*.

The training and improvement of the physical, intellectual, social, and moral powers and sentiments of the youth of our country, requires something more than

the school-house, academy, college, and university. The young mind should receive judicious training in the field, in the garden, in the barn, in the workshop, in the parlor, in the kitchen—in a word, around the hearth-stone, at *home*.

Whatever intellectual attainments your son may have acquired, he is unfit to go forth into society if he has not had thrown around him the genial and purifying influences of parents, sisters, brothers, and the *man-saving* influence of the family government. The nation must look for virtue, wisdom, and strength, to the education that controls and shapes the *home policy* of the family circle. There can be no love of country where there is no love of home. Patriotism, true and genuine, the only kind worthy of the name, derives its mighty strength from fountains that gush out around the hearth-stone; and those who forget to cherish the household interests, will soon learn to look with indifference upon the interests of their common country.

We must cultivate the roots—not the tops. We must make the *family government*, the School, the Farm, the Church, the Shop, the Agricultural Fairs, the laboratories of our future greatness. We must educate our sons to be farmers, artizans, architects, engineers, geologists, botanists, chemists—in a word, practical men. Their eyes must be turned from Washington to their States, counties, townships, districts, *homes*. This is true patriotism; and the only patriotism that will perpetually preserve the nation.

With a territory stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and with sea coasts more than five thousand miles in extent, we have almost all varieties of soils, climates, and productions; and, consequently, we have within our boundaries, citizens of every kind of pursuit and occupation. The world never witnessed, before the present time, such a busy, bustling, energetic crowd of human beings, scattered over a territory so vast, and living under a government supported by their own will. Farmers and planters, mechanics and manufacturers, merchants and traders, miners of iron, and gold, and silver, and copper, and coal; men of labor and industry, engaged in business in town and country, on the oceans of the world, and on our lakes and rivers—all of these, while they constitute the strength of our confederacy, have, in their various pursuits, their own peculiar customs, habits, manners, and tastes; yet, their constitutions and their laws protect their rights, *individually*, and recognize their political equality. In this consists the strength and the beauty of our form of government.

We require, we must have, the full grown policy of each of these pursuits, with the thousands of others that will naturally arise in a government whose interests are so diversified:—Each of these should be left free to arrive at full perfection, without the influences of a great, overshadowing, central, consolidated government.

A great proverbial economist has said, “Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.” We may, with a slight modification, apply the proverb to government. Let us take care of the smaller communities, and the larger will take care of themselves. I recently asked a friend of mine, an intelligent farmer, “For whom did you vote for township trustee?” “Well, really, I have forgotten,” was his answer. “Forgotten!” I replied, “Forgotten! What! Do you not know the man to whom you have entrusted the management of affairs most intimately connected with the moral and intellectual welfare of your children? Do you forget the person who is to have charge of your schools, and to choose teachers for the future men and women of your country? Why, my dear sir, never be so forgetful again. Hereafter select the most useful and intelligent man in your township, for trustee; and never forget the choice you make. After this, select the best man for county commissioneer, to direct your municipal government. If you have another great man, send him to the legislature, to speak your voice in framing laws to protect your person, property, and character while you live, and the rights of your widow and children, when you shall be no more. Then, if your catalogue of great men is exhausted, but you have one left with about half sense, send him to Congress.”

This advice was given from a full conviction of its correctness. How can you expect the heart of this republic to be free from corruption and fraud, when the little streams and rivulets which nourish it are neglected? The fountain heads and springs of this nation—the people of the several States and Territories—in their

primary organizations, in their local policy, laws, customs, and manners—are the sources from which the national government must derive, politically, whatever of virtue, wisdom, or strength it may possess.

It has been justly said, that the two great leading objects of human pursuit, are Agriculture and Mechanism. In these are comprehended the wealth of the country. Their prosperity indicates the prosperity of the nation.

We have too long regarded as the wise man, the representative who devises the best system of finance, to carry forward great enterprises by borrowing millions. Suppose we establish a new standard by which to measure men; and regard him as the wise man who devises a system that will support, and advance, the true interests of Agricultural, Mechanical, and Manufacturing pursuits. He who is a good model farmer, is as much entitled to distinction and office, as is the man who has commanded a regiment in battle. He who shall ascertain the cause of the potato rot, and prescribe a preventive, will be as much entitled to the respect and thanks of his fellow-men, as he who may manage the finances of a bank successfully. The country will not be retrograding, when the highest office shall be given to the Mechanic, or the Manufacturer, who shall make the best specimen of mechanism, or the finest piece of cloth. Let the friends of the *Plow*, the *Loom*, and the *Anvil*, have their associations, conventions, shows, and Fairs. These are the *great universities of Practical, Agricultural, and Mechanical knowledge*.

How limited is our knowledge of the chemical properties of the air that we breathe—of the water that we drink—or of the soil on which we are dependent for the food that supports life! How ignorant we are of the various natures and qualities of the different ores and minerals that lie in profusion all around us! What do the students in our colleges and universities learn of the botanical characteristics of our grasses, grains, fruits, trees, and flowers? And, on their return to their homes, what information can they communicate to their neighbors, in relation to the physiological peculiarities of those animals for which there is, in the market and on the farm, the greatest demand?

The progress of a happy change is visible in every part of our country. During the course of the present year, one-fourth of the whole nation will have assembled at our numerous State and County Fairs; and the most favorable results will follow these exhibitions of the enterprise, skill, and industry of the people.

In many parts of the Union the people are organizing Agricultural Schools, and Colleges, in which the science of planting and cultivating will be taught in place of human butchery. The schoolmaster is beginning to be regarded as one whose profession is as noble as that of the buttoned gentleman. The public mind seems to have awakened to the realization of something practical. Each man is asking, for himself, information with respect to the *best system—the best mode—the best manner*—of reaping the reward of labor bestowed upon the earth, or in the making of those articles which are found necessary for his comfort and condition in life. In the investigation of these questions, men are willing to exchange views and opinions with their neighbors. They are not only willing, but anxious, to become acquainted, by personal observation, with modes of labor, machinery, and the productions of the earth; in a word, to have the full history of all that is around them.

The mechanic has access to the farmer—the farmer to the mechanic:—they meet and consult together. At these exhibitions, the most distinguished mechanics are present; and they bring with them, not only the work of their brains and hands, but active and observing minds to inquire into the wants of the country; and they return to their workshops to perfect the inventions that have been suggested by these means. The farmer, too, has a favorable opportunity, at these fairs, to make himself well acquainted with what is new and useful, and to see the best productions of different portions of the country.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence of recent great improvements in the business of farming, will appear, on instituting a comparison between the present condition of the agricultural interests of your State, and that condition in which these interests existed before the organization of these associations. There are, I doubt not, those present, who, if they will look back over a period of twenty-five years, can make the comparison to which I refer.

In the lapse of that time, what improved modes of cultivating various soils have been discovered and adopted by the farmers of New York! How many new kinds of agricultural implements have been brought into profitable use! How many farmers would now be willing to go back to the use of the old farming implements and the old method of farming? How many new varieties of grains, fruits, and vegetables have been introduced, to increase the value of your crops! What changes have taken place, with respect to the number and value of your breeds of cattle, horses, sheep, swine, and poultry! What improvements have been made in the management and value of your dairies! What is the value of the stimulus that has been imparted to your home industry by the encouragement which agricultural associations have given to the manufacture of household fabrics, and other articles of domestic production!

The men of labor of this nation, are under an obligation to regard the State of New York as a national benefactor. We have the fruits of the genius and perseverance of your Fulton and Clinton; and the influence of the example of your distinguished son, the lamented Silas Wright, whose days were devoted to the cause of labor, and who, in his life, presented a model worthy of all imitation, of a high-minded, far-seeing statesman, an upright and an honest man. His name and fame are the common property of the nation. We have, too, the example, and the results, of your State agricultural organization, which, for a quarter of a century, by its transactions, reports, and fairs, has been giving information and encouragement, to the men of toil in every portion of the country. And this day, we see before us some of the richest trophies of your noble enterprise.

Citizens of the State of New York, you cannot avoid receiving encomiums and encouragement, while you continue to prosecute this work of State and national improvement. You have, among your visitors to-day, citizens from more than twenty States of the Union—from the South, North, East, and West. There cannot be any just cause of jealousy, dissension, or hostility, among the friends of American labor and enterprise, in the various sections of the country. They are bound together, by every motive and consideration which can influence the hearts of men to preserve the peace, promote the harmony, and advance the prosperity of their common country. A great chain of twenty-five State fairs, and more than a thousand annual county fairs, while supporting and imparting strength to the industrial interests of the nation, will have a natural tendency to exclude sectional prejudices, and to bind us together in national harmony and brotherly love.

The present national greatness of the United States is mainly attributable to two obvious principles—the influence of *law* upon our citizens, and their attachments to their own municipal and local governments. Just in proportion as we have departed from the strictest observance of law, and looked abroad into the domestic institutions of our neighbors, have we been led into difficulties and trials. There is no higher duty of the citizen—than to maintain by word, deed, and action, the absolute supremacy of law. We should bear in mind this great truth, that the first public act of disobedience to the law is the first fatal step in the downward road to anarchy.

Let the American citizen discharge, faithfully, not only his national obligations, but his public and private local duties. This can be done, in the most effective manner, by guarding against the slightest encroachments upon the compact which makes us one people; by a strict observance of law; and by a true discharge of those essential, religious, political, and social duties which lie at the foundations of society. Let us, like our fathers, be watchful and faithful, at the fireside—on the farm—in the school district—in the township—in the county—in the State. Let us establish and maintain good morals. Let us encourage the growth of the arts and sciences, and all branches of useful industry. Let us continue our efforts to advance the agricultural, mechanical, and manufacturing interests of the Union. And, finally, let us teach the rising generation to love their whole country, and all parts of it—especially their own hearth-stones—*their own homes*.





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